(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government are considering to provide special concession to B.S.N.L's senior citizen subscribers in the monthly rentals;

(d) if so, by when; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The following concessions are offered by MTNL to senior citizen under "Plan 250":—

(i) No registration charges.

(ii) 25% rebate in Installation charges.

(iii) 25% rental rebate.

(iv) Reduced Security Deposit of Rs. 1125/- for local & STD line.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise in view of (c) above.

(e) BSNL has introduced 'Sulabh Scheme' for all subscribers including senior citizen from October, 2003 under which the rental is substantially lower, ranging from Rs. 99/- to Rs. 160/- per month depending on the capacity of exchange system.

Slump in export of computers

1660. SHRIC. PERUMAL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether export of computers has slumped during the year 2002-03 as compared to the year 2001-02;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken to ensure that there is no decrease in export of computers in the coming years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) No slump in export of computers has been observed in 2002-03 over the year 2001-2002. The export of computers during 2001-2002 was Rs. 15.37 crore and in 2002-2003 was Rs. 19.45 crore.

(c) Steps taken by the Government to encourage IT hardware are given in the enclosed Statement.

Statement

Steps taken by the Government to promote the Hardware Sector

1. Peak rate of customs duty continues to be 20%. Customs duty on project imports with investment of at least Rs. 5 crore in plants and machinery is @10%. Customs duty on Computers and Peripherals is @10%. All storage devices, integrated circuits, microprocessors, data display tubes and deflection components of colour monitors continue at 0%. Customs duty on Information Technology Agreement (ITA-1) bound items is as per commitments. Customs duty on parts of computers and SMPS has been fully exempted. Customs Duty on specified raw materials/inputs used for manufacture of electronic components or optical fibres/cables is @ 0%. Customs duty on specified capital goods used for manufacture of electronic goods is @ 0%. Specified infrastructure equipment for basic/ cellular/internet, V-SAT, radio paging and public mobile radio trunked services and parts of such equipment exempted from basic customs duty. Customs duty exemption to mobile switching centres presently available to cellular mobile telephone service providers has been extended to imports by universal access service providers. Customs duty on cell phones continues at 5%. Laptops brought as part of baggage are exempted from customs duty.

2. Export Promotion Capital Goods Scheme (EPCG) allows capital goods on payment of 5% customs duty. The Export Obligation under the scheme is linked to the duty saved and is 8 times the duty saved on capital goods imported, to be fulfilled over a period of 8 years. Import of capital goods upto 10 years

old and import of capital goods for pre-production and post-production facilities are permitted under the scheme. Import of spares is also permitted to facilitate upgradation of existing plant and machinery.

3. Supplies of Information Technology Agreement (ITA-1) items and notified zero duty telecom/electronic items in the Domestic Tariff Area (DTA) by EHTP/Export Oriented Unit (EOU) units are counted for the purpose of fulfilment of positive NFE.

4. 100% depreciation is available to computers and computer peripherals over a period of 3 years for all types of electronic units under EOU/EHTP/STP/SEZ schemes.

5. Special Economic Zones (SEZs) are being set up to enable hassle free manufacturing and trading for export purposes. Sales from Domestic Tariff Area (DTA) to SEZs are being treated as physical export. This entitles domestic suppliers to Drawback/DEPB benefits, CST exemption and Service Tax exemption.

6. EOU/EHTP units are eligible for Income Tax exemption on export profits, upto 2010, in terms of Sections 10Aand 10B of the Income Tax Act.

7. Threshold limit for obtaining "Export House" status reduced to Rs. 5 crores from Rs. 15 crores for Small Scale Industry, tiny sector, cottage sector, units located in North East States/Sikkim/ J&K; exporters exporting to countries in Latin America/CIS/ Sub Sahara Africa and units having ISO 9000 (Series) status. The status holders are eligible for the following new/special facilities:

* 100% retention of foreign exchange in Exchange Earners' Foreign Currency (EEFC) account;

* Enhancement in normal repatriation period from 180 days to 360 days.

Development of Simputers

1661. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state: